

SMaRT Station®
Wildlife Identification Sheet

BIRDS



**Species of
Special Concern**

Burrowing Owls*

This little owl is seen more often in daylight than most other owls. It often perches near its hole and, when approached too closely, it will bob up and down and finally dive into its burrow rather than take flight. It usually takes over burrows that have been abandoned but is quite capable of digging its own.

Look For: A small, brown-and-white speckled owl that lives in burrows.



Great Blue Heron*

The Great Blue Heron can stand as still as a statue at the water's edge, waiting and watching for a fish or frog to happen by. The instant one appears, the bird makes a lightning-fast strike with its spear-like bill.

Look For: A tall, grayish bird with white face, yellow bill, and black on its shoulders, crown, and belly. It has broad wings, a slow wing beat, and folded neck in flight.



Great Egret*

This magnificent heron was almost driven to extinction by people killing it for its beautiful white plumes, which were used to trim hats. Fortunately, it recovered, but it is still not out of danger. The destruction of wetlands, especially in the West, poses a current threat to these majestic birds.

Look For: A large, white heron with yellow bill and dark yellow legs.



Red-tailed Hawk*

The Red-tailed Hawk divides its time between perching in trees and soaring, always looking for prey, such as small rodents or reptiles. Like other buteos (soaring hawks), it drifts in wide circles in the sky.

Look For: Brown above, white below, often with dark streaks on belly. May be all brown in West. The tail is brown in juveniles, orangish in adults.



Mallard*

The most commonly found duck in the world, the Mallard numbers nearly 10 million in North America alone.

Look For: Male has a green head and neck, white neck ring and purple breast, and gray wings and body. Orange legs and yellow bill are very noticeable. The female is speckled brown with an orange-and-black speckled bill.



White Pelican

The white pelican does not dive for food but scoops up fish in its pouch as it swims. In recent decades the number of pelicans has dropped drastically because of the use of pesticides, human disturbance and the draining of wetlands.

Look For: A large white pelican (9-foot wingspread); long, orange bill with a pouch and short orange legs and feet.



Endangered

California Clapper Rail

The California clapper rail, known for its rattling call, lives in coastal salt and brackish marshes and tidal sloughs. As a result of habitat loss and predators, California clapper rails are now restricted almost entirely to the marshes of San Francisco estuary, where the only known breeding populations occur.

Look For: Males and females are similar in appearance, with long bills, olive brown back and wings marked by dark brown streaks; the breast is rusty cinnamon, and black and white bars crisscross its flanks.



Red-winged Blackbird*

The Red-winged Blackbird is a marsh bird that has had a population explosion in recent years and can now be found nesting in fields, brushy places, and at woodland edges.

Look For: The male is glossy black with red shoulder patches bordered by yellow. The female and juveniles are brown with streaks.

SMaRT Station®
Wildlife Identification Sheet (cont'd)

INSECTS



Anise Swallowtail Butterfly*

The Anise Swallowtail is a common western species that is frequently seen along roadsides and in vacant lots. This is because its favorite food plant, wild anise, is a weed that favors these habitats.

Look For: Black wings with big yellow spots; hind wings have blue spots and orange eyespots.



Painted Lady Butterfly

The Painted Lady is frequently seen on hillside and empty lots. This butterfly is also known as the Thistle Butterfly because of the caterpillars' food preference and as the Cosmopolitan because it is the most widely distributed butterfly in the world.

Look For: The adult Painted Lady is mostly black, brown, and orange with some white spots; the underside is gray with white and red markings.

MAMMALS



Black-tailed Jack Rabbit*

The Black-tailed Jackrabbit may look silly with its large "donkey" ears, long legs, and big feet, but it is well suited to its harsh environment. Mammals that live in hot climates can cool themselves by releasing heat through their long thin ears, slender legs, and big feet.

Look For: A large, fast, gray-brown rabbit with enormous ears and a black-striped tail and rump.



California Ground Squirrel

The California Ground Squirrel lives in burrows generally on hillsides or low earth banks where it digs long intricate tunnel systems.

Look For: Gray, light brown and dusky fur mix which gives the California Ground Squirrel a mottled appearance. A band of slightly darker fur, flecked with light gray, extends from the head over the middle of the back. Gray fur forms a cape over the sides of the head and shoulders.



Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse

Salt-marsh harvest mice are limited to saltwater and brackish marshes bordering the San Francisco Bay area. Its range continues to shrink because of habitat loss due to the draining and filling of wetlands for industrial and suburban development.

Look For: A dark brown dorsal area with a dark stripe extending vertically on its back, and pinkish cinnamon or tawny on its ventral side.

REPTILES



Sagebrush Lizard*

The Sagebrush Lizard is found in areas of sagebrush and gravelly soils or fine-sand dunes. It is usually never far from shelter such as stony piles, crevices, animal burrows.

Look For: Grayish-green to brown body with some darker spots and crossbars. Sides may be reddish-orange. Males have light-blue mottling (not patches) on throat and darker blue belly patches.

For additional information and activities, see the "San Francisco Bay Trail/ Sunnyvale Activity Guide" available in the SMaRT Station lobby and on the SMaRT Station Tours webpage at www.sunnyvalerecycles.org.

*Information obtained from www.yahooligans.com/content/animals/